ELPA Primer

What is the ELPA?
The English Language Proficiency Assessment is the annual assessment given to Michigan's students who are eligible for ELL (English Language Learner) services.

Who takes the ELPA?
Students who are eligible for ELL services, are K-12 students, and who are enrolled in a Michigan public school or charter school academy take the ELPA. Non-public students take the ELPA based on the school's agreement with an LEA.

How are eligible ELLs identified?
The Home Language Survey (HLS), a Title VI NCLB reporting requirement, is given to all students at the time of enrollment. It asks two questions:

1. Is the student's native tongue a language other than English (LOTE)?
2. Is a LOTE spoken in the student's home or environment?

If either of the answers to these questions is "yes," then the student is eligible to be assessed for English proficiency. Based on this assessment, as well as other locally-determined criteria which should include expert opinion, a district will enter the student into ELL services offered within the district, not enter the student and place them in mainstream education, or, in the case of a student who was enrolled but who has made sufficient progress determined by the district, exited from ELL services. In this last case, the student is given the designation "FLEP," or "Formerly Limited English Proficient."

Students then continue to take the Spring ELPA year to year until they are exited from services. It is not mandatory to administer the ELPA to a student who has been exited from services before the first day of the academic year in which the ELPA is given, i.e., if a student was exited from services before the beginning of school in 2007, he or she would not have to participate in the ELPA. A student who is enrolled in ELL services, or who is eligible for ELL services even if none are offered within the district, must take the ELPA.

A FLEP student may be given the ELPA at the district's discretion. Often this is done for "monitoring" purposes.

Why is the ELPA given?
It measures, on an annual basis, the progress Michigan's ELLs are making in the acquisition of their English language skills. Reports on their progress are provided to districts, ISDs, the state itself, and the federal government. The results also are calculated for AYP (Annual Yearly Progress) according to the AMAO's (Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives).

When is the ELPA given?
It is always administered in the Spring. The regular testing window is typically the last two weeks of March and through the full month of April. For Spring 2008, this window is from Monday, March 17, 2008 to Friday, April 25, 2008. For Spring 2009, these dates are projected to be Monday, March 16, 2009 to Friday, April 24, 2009.

What grade level(s) is the ELPA for?
Grades K-12. The ELPA does not have one version for each grade level; it is broken up into five grade spans, called Assessment Levels. Each Assessment Level has a Roman numeral and a color:

Color	Assessment Level	Grade Level(s)
	I	K
	II	1-2
	III	3-5
	IV	6-8
	V	9-12

What is assessed on the ELPA?

Every ELPA has four domains, which are assessed as sections, as if they were sub-tests. The domains are Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking. Although they appear in this order in the test booklets, these domains can be assessed in any order that the coordinator and assessment administrator choose.

Every section of the ELPA is untimed. Some projected or estimated times are provided during teleconferences (see below), but with the heavy caveat that students should not be "cut off" at any point during a section. Each sections must be administered in a continuous session (with the exception of Writing—see below).

The Listening, Reading, and Writing sections are group-administered. The Writing section can be broken down into two parts, Writing Conventions and Writing. The Listening and Reading sections as well as the Writing Conventions part of the Writing section, are all multiple-choice items. The Writing part of the Writing section, as well as the entire Speaking section, contain all open- or constructed-response items.

The Speaking section is individually-administered. Students have five different speaking tasks at all levels. These speaking tasks are scored by the assessment administrator or proctor at the time of scoring. For this reason, proctors and assessment administrators must be well-trained by their building and/or district coordinators in the use of the Speaking rubrics, which appear in the Directions for Administration manuals. The state provides a Speaking Scoring Training DVD to assist districts in training their personnel.

What ELPA testing materials are provided?

In terms of physical materials (booklets), Levels I and II of the ELPA function differently than levels III, IV, and V.

For Levels I and II, students record their answers directly in their Test Booklets, which can be cut apart and scanned by the scoring contractor. The back of these booklets contain the Speaking Rubrics which are filled in by the proctor or assessment administrator at the time of administration of the Speaking section (see above). Since this person will take the student's booklet and use it to bubble in rubric scores, a separate Speaking booklet is provided for both Levels I and II which contains all of the Speaking items. This Speaking booklet is therefore reusable among groups of students. At Levels I and II, a demographic form appears on the reverse of the student's test booklet.

For Levels III, IV, and V, students record all answers in the Answer Document, which is separate from the student Test Booklet. Thus, at these levels, the Test Booklet is not scanned and is reusable between students (provided no marks have been made prior to administration). On the reverse of the Answer Document at these levels is the demographic form. The Speaking section for these levels appears in the back of the student Test Booklet, and a proctor or assessment administrator records rubric scores in the student's Answer Document.

Each of these levels has a Directions for Administration manual (DFA). The DFA contains all general information for coordinators (called the Front/Back Matter or F/B) plus the specific Directions for Administering for <u>all</u> forms of that level (see below). Assessment proctors and administrators must be careful to administer only the section of the DFA relevant to the form number that their students are taking (shown by tabs on the sides of each page).

What are the different forms of the ELPA?
At each Assessment Level, there are multiple forms so that embedded field test (FT) items can be evenly distributed among Michigan's diverse population of ELLs. As a business rule, each district (except for the largest ones) will only get one form of the ELPA at a given Assessment Level to minimize administration errors.

In Spring 2008:

- Assessment Level I (Grade K) has only one form. This is because there are no embedded FT items featured in Level I for this administration. This was done to make the test shorter in response to specific feedback from the ELL field.

- Assessment Level II (Grades 1-2) has two forms, Forms 1 and 2. There are two different Speaking booklets, numbered accordingly.

- Assessment Levels III, IV, and V (Grades 3-12) have each three forms, Forms 1, 2, and 3. There are two different Answer Documents, one that works for Forms 1 <u>and</u> 2 and a different one that works with Form 3.

What levels of staff roles or responsibilities are recognized for the ELPA?
1. ELPA District Coordinator, who:
   a. Chooses ELPA Cycle (see below)
   b. Makes and tracks ELPA orders
   c. Aids in training personnel
   d. Receives and distributes test materials
   e. Collects test materials at end of testing window
   f. Checks packaging for return to Harcourt (now Pearson)
   g. Makes shipment on date according to cycle
2. ELPA Building Coordinator, who:
   a. Trains personnel
   b. Ensures security of testing materials
   c. Prepares material for return to District Coordinator at end of testing window
   d. Handles and resolves concerns
3. ELPA Assessment Coordinator, who:
   a. Administers the test
   b. Oversees Assessment Proctors
   c. Must hold teaching certificate
4. ELPA Assessment Proctor, who:
   a. Aids in the administration of the test
   b. May be paraprofessional or support staff

What support and communication systems does the state make available for ELPA Coordinators?
- ELPA Coordinator Updates, which function like MEAP Coordinator Updates and go to designated ELPA District Coordinators and participating ELL Coordinators at ISDs
- ELPA ListServ announcements, which go to a one-way public open-membership e-mail list
- ELPA Teleconferences, which are held in early- or mid-February each year
- OEAA Conferences, held in the late summer and fall
- Annual MSTC, MABE (Michigan Association of Bilingual Educators) and MITESOL (Michigan Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) Conferences
- ELL Assessment Subcommittee Meetings, held four times every year
- ELPA Speaking Scoring DVD
- OEAA Shared Support Staff
- Public ELPA Resource Site at www.michigan.gov/elpa
- OEAA Secure Site at www.michigan.gov/oeaa-secure
- Dedicated ELPA/ELL E-mail address at mde-elpa@michigan.gov

What reports are made available for the ELPA?
Domain scores are reported as scale scores. An overall score and resultant performance level is calculated from an aggregate of the domain scores. A fifth domain, Comprehension, is taken from items whose standards have been identified as contributing to the Comprehension score.

Districts receive:
- Individual Student Reports (ISRs) in electronic and paper formats
- Parent Reports (PRs) in electronic and paper formats
- Class Rosters (CRs) in electronic and paper formats
- Student Labels (SLs) in electronic and paper formats
- School Overall Summaries in electronic and paper formats
- School Domain Summaries in electronic and paper formats
- School Demographic Summaries in electronic and paper formats
- District Overall Summaries in electronic and paper formats
- District Domain Summaries in electronic and paper formats
- District Demographic Summaries in electronic and paper formats

ISDs can access:
- ISD Overall Summaries in electronic format
- ISD Domain Summaries in electronic format
- ISD Demographic Summaries in electronic format

Also available in electronic format are:
- State Overall Summaries
- State Domain Summaries
- State Demographic Summaries

These reports are all generated by the contractor and delivered to the OEAA. Also generated by the contractor is the Student Data File (SDF).

Which performance levels are reported?
Although only three performance levels are mandated by NCLB (Basic, Intermediate, and Proficient), Michigan's ELPA reports five proficiency levels:
- Basic (B)
- Low Intermediate (LI)
- High Intermediate (HI)
- Proficient (P)

- Advanced Proficient (AP)

What is the ELPA Initial Screening?
The ELPA Initial Screening (also called the ELPA Screener) is a diagnostic tool to assess the English language of students who are new enrollees to a district and/or who did not take the ELPA in the district in which they enrolled during the most recent Spring administration of the ELPA. It is used as one source of data, among several others, that aids in the district's decision-making process for placement of eligible ELLs into ELL programs.

Starting in the fall of 2007, the ELPA Initial Screening is also used in the identification of ELLs for the purposes of aggregating n-counts of eligible students for Title III LEP subgrants.

How is the ELPA Initial Screening developed?
Items for the ELPA Initial Screening are taken directly from operational items on the previous Spring ELPA. This is done so that the scale score tables for the ELPA Initial Screening are the same as for the Spring ELPA.

The items that are used on the ELPA Initial Screening are not used again in future administrations of the Spring ELPA. Currently, we are working to stabilize the ELPA Initial Screening so that there are few if any changes to make to composed files.

When is the ELPA Initial Screening administered?
The ELPA Initial Screening is designed to be administered year-round. This is because ELL students can arrive any time during the school year, and school districts are held to the federal "ten-day" rule, which states that schools must administer an English language proficiency assessment and determine placement for that ELL within ten school days from the date of enrollment.

For that reason, the ELPA Initial Screening has some special rules and procedures:
1. The ELPA Initial Screening is not pre-identified with pre-applied labels like the Spring ELPA. Only blank documents arrive in districts.
2. District coordinators make orders through the use of a downloadable and faxable order form, found on the public ELPA Web site. OEAA staff the process and send out each order.
3. The contractor is responsible for composing files using selected items, and to make updates to those files from year to year.
4. Both used and unused materials are to be kept in locked, secure storage for use at any time during the year.
5. Used materials are sent back to the OEAA for archiving at two points: once during the Leaf Cycle administration, and again at the end of the school year. This is done through e-mailed printable UPS labels from the OEAA. Coordinators can also request a label at any time if they find they have a significant amount of used materials piling up.
6. Coordinators can order additional materials at any point using the form found on the public ELPA Web site.

What are the cycles of the ELPA Initial Screening?
There are three cycles of the ELPA Initial Screening, associated with specific dates that students are assessed:

	Leaf Cycle July 15 to November 30

	Snowflake Cycle December 1 to July 14, except during the Spring window
	Sunshine Cycle February 15 to July 14: FOR LEVEL I ONLY

The reasons to have three different cycles are essentially psychometric.

The Leaf Cycle assesses students based on the English they should have acquired during the previous school year. For that reason, students take the Assessment Level of the ELPA Initial Screening based on their previous grade level. Thus the following matrix:

- Students coming in as 12th graders were 11th graders the previous year and thus take Level V.
- Students coming in as 11th graders were 10th graders the previous year and thus take Level V.
- Students coming in as 10th graders were 9th graders the previous year and thus take Level V.
- Students coming in as 9th graders were 8th graders the previous year and thus take Level IV. Note that this departs from the "regular" or Spring Assessment Level associations with grade levels.
- Students coming in as 8th graders were 7th graders the previous year and thus take Level IV.
- Students coming in as 7th graders were 6th graders the previous year and thus take Level IV.
- Students coming in as 6th graders were 5th graders the previous year and thus take Level III. Note that this departs from the "regular" or Spring Assessment Level associations with grade levels.
- Students coming in as 5th graders were 4th graders the previous year and thus take Level III.
- Students coming in as 4th graders were 3rd graders the previous year and thus take Level III.
- Students coming in as 3rd graders were 2nd graders the previous year and thus take Level II. Note that this departs from the "regular" or Spring Assessment Level associations with grade levels.
- Students coming in as 2nd graders were 1st graders the previous year and thus take Level II.
- Students coming in as 1st graders were Kindergarteners the previous year and thus take Level I. Note that this departs from the "regular" or Spring Assessment Level associations with grade levels.
- Students coming in as K students were either Preschoolers or did not attend school the previous year and thus take Level I, but are NOT assessed with Reading or Writing.

This is the case until December 1, when the Snowflake Cycle begins. At that time, new enrollees adhere to the "regular" or Spring Assessment Level associations to grade spans, described before for the Spring administration. The Snowflake Cycle assesses students on the English they have acquired so far that same school year, which is why the grade level associations to the Assessment Levels "switch over" to the Spring ones, described above. The Snowflake Cycle then is given until mid-July, when the system begins again with a new Leaf Cycle.

The Sunshine Cycle is new in 2008. This was created in response to feedback from the field requesting that we have ELPA Initial Screening materials ready for preschoolers participating in "Kindergarten Round-Up." These preschoolers would then be treated as if they were incoming Leaf Cycle Kindergarten students (see above). However, our Leaf Cycle was not open until July 14. Thus, from February 15 to July 14, students who will be Kindergarten students in the next fall can be assessed with the ELPA Initial Screening (Listening and Speaking sections ONLY) using the Sunshine Cycle. The Sunshine Cycle is thus restricted to taking in raw scores for Level I Listening and Speaking sections only.

No ELPA Initial Screening is ever administered during the Spring ELPA window.

How is the ELPA Initial Screening distributed to districts?
Last year, the state used a DMB contractor to print and distribute test materials according to orders that came in from various districts. After the peak season in the fall, the remainder of the materials were sent to the OEAA, and OEAA staff now take, process, and ship orders for the remainder of the 2007-2008 academic year. The OEAA saved almost $750,000 against the cost of the printing and shipping of the 2006 screener, which was done by the contractor.

What reports are available for the ELPA Initial Screening?
Reports for the ELPA Initial Screening are generated in a different way than the Spring ELPA reports. There is no return of testing materials for scoring. Instead, district and school coordinators, as well as those designated in the secure OEAA system as "ELPA Screener Users," can enter in raw scores (number correct) for each section of the ELPA Initial Screening administered to students on a screen within the secure OEAA Web site.

Once a student's demographic information and raw domain scores are entered, a user can instantly download and print three kinds of ELPA Initial Screening reports:
- Initial Student Report (ISR)
- Class Roster (CR)
- Student Data File (SDF)

These reports and data can then be placed in student files for the review of building- and district-level staff in order to aid in the making of instructional placement decisions.